

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 01560 031406Z
ACTION SS-25

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AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 1560

EXDIS

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, RH, US, UK, ZA
SUBJ: MEETING WITH ZANU LEADER SITHOLE FORCUSES ON WORK OF
CONSULTATIVE GROUP

REF: LUSAKA 1537

SUMMARY: AT SITHOLE'S REQUEST I MET WITH HIM JUNE 3 AND BRIEFED
HIM ON THE STATUS OF CONSULTATIVE GROUP'S WORK TO DATE. HE
READILY AGREED TO THE NEED FOR ENTRENCHED, CONFIDENCE BUILDING
MEASURES: ACCEPTED THE IDEA OF PENSION GUARANTEES;
WAS SOMEWHAT EVASIVE ABOUT PROVISIONS WHICH WOULD GIVE A
SUBSTANTIAL VOICE TO WHITES IN PARLIAMENT, AND SAID ZANU/
SITHOLE SHOULD RUN A CARETAKER GOVERNMENT UNDER THE DIRECTION
OF THE BRITISH. SITHOLE PLANS TO RETURN TO RHODESIA JUNE 19 "IN
ORDER TO HAVE BETTER CONTACT WITH ZANU FIGHTING FORCES." END
SUMMARY.

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1. IN OPENING CONVERSATION, I NOTED THAT CONSULTATIVE GROUP
BRIEFED SITHOLE'S REPRESENTATIVES IN LUSAKA JUNE 1 (REFTL)
AND THAT THE GROUP COUNTED ON MEETING WITH SITHOLE JUNE 8 IN
LONDON. YITHOLE CONFIRMED THAT HE WOULD BE AVAILABLE IN LONDON
ON THE 8TH AND ASKED IF I COULD GIVE HIM A BRIEFING ON THE
PROGRESS MADE BY THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP IN PREPARATION FOR THAT
MEETING. NOT GOING BEYOND WHAT STEELE HAD ALREADY TOLD SITHOLE

REPS WEDNESDAY, I DID SO. SITHOLE RESPONDED TO SPECIFIC POINTS
RAISED IN THE BRIEFING AS FOLLOWS:

---CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES IN GENERAL: ZANU IS CONCERNED
THAT THE INFRASTRUCTURE IT INHERITS AT INDEPENDENCE BE KEPT
INTACT. WHITE FEARS ARE UNDERSTANDABLE; THERE IS A NEED TO
MAINTAIN THE CONFIDENCE OF THE WHITES. ZANU DOES NOT WANT
TO PRESIDE OVER ANOTHER ANGOLA OR MOZAMBIQUE. THEREFORE, IN
PRINCIPLE, ZANU FAVORS CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES.

---ENTRENCHED CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS: IN PRINCIPLE, ZANU
HAS NO OBJECTIONS.

---INDEPENDENT JUDICIARY: THIS IS COMPLETELY ACCEPTABLE.

---PENSIONS: HE AGREES THAT AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE SHOULD
ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY. ANY GOVERNMENT TAKING OVER SHOULD
ACCEPT LIABILITIES AS WELL AS ASSETS.

---SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR WHITE REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT:
THIS WAS NOT DIRECTLY ADDRESSED BY SITHOLE. HE APPEARED TO
ACCEPT THE IDEA IN HIS GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE NEED FOR
AND ACCEPTABILITY OF CONFIDENCE BUILDING MEASURES.

---FRANCHISE: UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE IS THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE
FORMULA--NO OBJECTION TO FIXING VOTING AGE AT 21.

---STRUCTURE OF GOVERNMENT: ZANU FAVORS UNICAMERAL LEGIS-
LATIVE BODY WITH EXECUTIVE PRESIDENT.

---ACT OF OBLIVION: PERSONALLY HE FOUND THIS ACCEPTABLE,
BUT IT WOULD HAVE TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE ZANU CENTRAL COMMITTEE.
IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO SELL TO THE HOT HEADS. HE, SITHOLE,
BECAUSE OF HIS PRESTIGE AND FOLLOWING, WAS THE ONE LEADER
CAPABLE OF SELLING THE IDEA.

---CARETAKER GOVERNMENT: ZANU, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF A
BRITISH GOVERNOR GENERAL, SHOULD RUN THE CARETAKER GOVERN-
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MENT. THIS WOULD BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH PAST BRITISH DECOLONIZATION
PRACTICES. ZANU IS THE PARTY TO PLAY THIS ROLE BECAUSE IT HAS
TAKEN THE LEAD IN THE ARMED STRUGGLE AND HAS THE GREATEST
FOLLOWING WITHIN RHODESIA.

2. SITHOLE SAID THAT HE PLANNED TO RETURN TO RHODESIA JUNE 19
WHERE HE WOULD BE ABLE TO TALK DIRECTLY TO THE RHODESIAN
AUTHORITIES AND MADE CONTACT WITH THE "FREEDOM FIGHTERS."
HIS PURPOSE IN COMMUNICATING WITH THE GUERRILLAS, HE SAID,
WOULD BE TO PREPARE THE GROUND WORK FOR THEIR INTEGRATION INTO
THE ARMED FORCES OF AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE.

3. AT THE END OF THE CONVERSATION, I URGED THAT SITHOLE AND
HIS ADVISORS GIVE FURTHER CONSIDERATION TO THE PROBLEMS WE
HAD TOUCHED ON SO AS TO BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS THEM IN DETAIL
WITH THE CONSULTATIVE GROUP IN LONDON. HE SAID THEY WOULD DO SO.

COMMENT: IN DISCUSSING THE CARETAKER GOVERNMENT, I HAD ADVANCED
THE IDEA OF AN APOLITICAL GOVERNMENT PRESIDED OVER (AS ONE

POSSIBILITY) BY A BRITISH GOVERNOR GENERAL. IN A PLEASANT,
BUT FIRM MANNER, SITHOLE MADE IT CLEAR THIS WAS UNACCEPTABLE.
HE REJECTED OUT OF HAND THE IDEA THAT A CARETAKER GOVERNMENT
COULD BE APOLITICAL AND MOVED INSTANTLY TO HIS ARGUMENT THAT
ZANU SHOULD HOLD THE REINS OF POWER DURING THE CARETAKER
PERIOD.
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